πολυάρητος: Signposting Epiphany in the *Hymn to Demeter* and the *Odyssey*


παιδά δὲ μοι τρέφε τόνδε, τὸν ὄψιγον καὶ ἀελπτον ὁπασαν ἀθάνατοι, πολυάρητος δὲ μοι ἐστιν. εἰ τὸν γ᾽ ἐκθρέγαιο καὶ ἣβης μέτρον ἴκοιτο ἦ ὅ κα τὶς σὲ ἱδοῦσα γυναικῶν θηλυτέραιον ἔκλεψαι· τόσα κὲν τοι ἀπὸ θρεπτήρια δοίην.

Just rear this boy for me, whom the immortals have granted me, late and beyond expectation, but in answer to many a prayer. If you were to raise him and see him to young manhood’s measure, then any woman who saw you might well envy you, so richly would I repay you for his nurturing.


τίς δ’ ὅδε Ναυσικά ἔσται καλός τε μέγας τε ἔξεινος; ποῦ δὲ μιν εὖρε; πόσις νῦ οἱ ἔσσεται αὐτῇ; ἦ τινα πο θελεβίντα κομίσσατο ἦς ὑπὸ νηὸς ἀνδρῶν τηλεδαπῶν, ἐπεὶ οὗ τινος ἐγχύθιεν εἰσίν· ἦ τίς οἱ εὐξαμένη πολυάρητος θεος ἥλθεν οὐφανόθεν καταβάς, ἐξει δὲ μιν ἄμμα πάντα.

Who is this large and handsome stranger whom Nausikaa has with her, and where did she find him? Surely, he is to be her husband, but is he a stray from some ship of alien men she found for herself, since there are no such hereabouts? Or did some god after much entreaty come down in answer to her prayers, out of the sky, and all his days will he have her?


Αὐτόλυκ’, αὐτὸς νῦν θόντο εὖρεο, ὅτε κη θεοὶ παιδὸς παιδὶ φίλων· πολυάρητος δὲ τοῦ ἐστι.

Autolykos, now find yourself that name you will bestow on your own child’s dear child, for you have prayed much to have him.


αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ γε, ὑπότοι ἦν ἤβης μητρώοις ἐς μέγα δόμα ἔλθη Παρνήσονδ’, ὅθε ποῦ μοι κτήματ’ ἔσσει, τῶν οὶ ἐγὼ δῶσω καὶ μην χάριοντ’ ἀποπέμψω.

Then when he grows up, and comes to the great house of his mother’s line, and Parnassos, where there are possessions that are called mine, I will give him freely of these to make him happy, and send him back to you.

---

1 Greek text from N. J. Richardson 1974
2 Greek text from P. Von der Mühll 1984
5.  

Οδ. 7.139-145 (trans. R. Lattimore 1967)

αὐτὰρ ὁ βῆ διὰ δῶμα πολύτλας δίος Ὄδυσσεύς
πολλὴν ἥρ’ ἔχων, ἴν οἱ περίχευεν Ἀθήνη,
δρφ’ ἱκετ’ Ἀρήτην τε καὶ Ἀλκίνοον βασιλῆα.
ἀμφὶ δ’ ἄρ’ Ἀρήτης βάλε γούνας χεῖρας Ὅδυσσεύς,
καὶ τότε δὴ ρ’ αὐτοῖο πάλιν χύτο θέσφατος ἀήρ.
οἱ δ’ άνευ ἐγένον ὅμον κάτα φώτα ἱδόντες,
θαύμαζον δ’ ὀρόσωντες

But now long-suffering great Odysseus went on through the house, wearing still
the deep mist that Athene had drifted
about him, until he came to Arete and to
the king, Alkinoós. Odysseus clasped
Arete’s knees in his arms, and at that
time the magical and surrounding mist
was drifted from him, and all fell silent
through the house when they saw the
man there, and they wondered looking on
him.

Select Bibliography:

Cook, Erwin. 2012. “Epiphany in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter and the Odyssey.” Papers of
the Langford Latin Seminar 15: 53-111.


the Homeric Hymn to Demeter.” Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica 5: 7-21.

Foley, Helene P., ed. 1994. The Homeric Hymn to Demeter: Translation, Commentary, and
Interpretive Essays. Princeton.


Mueller, Melissa. 2016. “Recognition and the Forgotten Senses in the Odyssey.” Helios 43.1: 1-
20.


Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica 73.1: 59-82.